

7/508/6/7/21

OF MAN AND REVOLUTION

AN ANARCHIST VISION

BY

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Man's dearest possession is life, and since it is given to him to live but once, he must so live as to feel no torturing regrets for years without purpose; so live as not to be seared with the shame of a cowardly and trivial past; so live that dying he can say: "All my life and all my strength were given to the finest cause in the world - the liberation of Mankind".

There are times such as the present when in order to see the real life situation of humanity in its full perspective it is necessary to rise above the absurd ways, the narrow outlooks, and the backward thinking which have for too long shackled the mind of man. At such times one must as far as possible try to look at our world from the outside - from the point of view of an extraterrestrial being from another planetary civilization which has long ago left behind in its barbaric past the bloodshed and terrors of war, mass poverty and famine, the heinous crime of torture by governments, the domination of society by avaricious ruling classes, and the agonies of oppression suffered by the working masses of our world.

Such an extraterrestrial being would, first of all, see the Earth we live on, together with the Sun and the other planets, as a small archipelago of islands in the great ocean of inter-stellar space reaching out to the outermost limits of the Milky Way. He would know that the whole great galaxy of stars of which we are such a tiny part began its career aeons ago as a huge cloud of fertilised cosmic dust, which spawned a hundred thousand million suns - and Mankind with all its good and evil. He would know that the first suns in our galaxy were born without a retinue of planets and lived lone lives. But that in their violent deaths they produced the seeds from which planetary solar systems would spring. He would also know that our own Sun and Earth came from one such seed - a thickening mist of diverse atoms, the heavier ones of which coalesced to form the hard body of our world, as well as the bodies of its sister planets.

Our extraterrestrial observer would further know that soon after this occurred an entirely new motion of matter began. The social atoms of the Earth, seeking the company of their fellows, began in time the phenomenon of living cells. To survive, these cells tapped various food sources in their surroundings and through countless reproductions of their kind created numberless species, each one of which was married in a particular way to the environment. But in doing so the hosts of cells peopling the Earth cumulatively changed the physical conditions of their whole terrestrial milieu over a great period of time and eventually made possible the existence of higher living forms.

These new forms arose through combinations of social cells becoming so integrated that they gave rise to wholly new kinds of material being in the form of many-celled animals and plants. And, as in the case of the single-celled forms which preceded them these new organisms were grouped into species adapted to the environment in various ways. Thereafter throughout the long eras of terrestrial time the broad spectrum of these species was always in a state of change. Species died out and new ones emerged to fill the vast field of ecological niches in the environment. The possibilities open to animal forms especially were almost endless. When in time warm-blooded creatures evolved, the high road to man and mind was thrown wide open.

The Emergence of Man

When Man emerged on the evolutionary stage he was a creature well equipped to play the part of an aggressive contestant in the savage struggle for existence. This survival equipment included certain biological and psychological characteristics which made possible highly integrated groups of individual men and women capable of dealing very effectively with everything - animal, vegetable, and mineral - in the surrounding environment.

But while Man looked like an animal he was, at the same time, a person with a mind of a highly sophisticated kind living in a trans-physical cultural milieu of social institutions, customs, attitudes, ideas, practices, and other minds

communicating by means of language. Many other species of the higher animals had created social groups, often with a relatively well-developed means of communication. Man, however, differed from all of these, both individually and collectively. As an individual, Man possesses a unique set of frontal lobes through which much of his instinctive drive and animal nature is transformed into human or social forms of thought and action. Thus it is through the workings of these lobes that Man the Animal becomes Man the Person; that individual animal imagination can give rise to the highest works of public art; that purposive animal behaviour is transformed into purposeful moral conduct; and that blind and instinctive sexual desire may become conscious and permanent human love. On the other hand, as a collective, Man differs from the other animals in that he has created a new and higher form of material being, called human society, on our planet. This is a qualitatively different form of material existence from anything in the biological and physical domains and is a purely cultural world with totally unique phenomena such as art, religion, morality, and science, which are wholly unknown to any other known species of social animal on our Earth.

As well as having a unique internal cultural environment, human society also has a novel external aspect in that from the outside it presents the appearance of a highly-integrated bio-cultural organism. As a physical whole, this organism is made up of both cultural artifacts, resulting from Man's labour, and the masses of human individuals bound together by bonds of mind in the form of a common language, ideas, attitudes, and beliefs.

The first such bio-cultural organisms to emerge on the Earth were tribes - primitive organizations of our humankind, but nevertheless far removed from similar social groups found among apes and monkeys. Like the individual animal organisms which had evolved before them, these tribes involved themselves with the biological and physical environment in highly specialised ways. Depending on what specific parts of the Earth they colonised, they hunted particular kinds of game and gathered certain varieties of vegetable foodstuffs.

The tribe's internal social system and structure was adapted so well to this particular ecological role that it was able to survive in the struggle for existence for countless millennia - a fact which was reflected in the oft-times beautiful cave paintings of tribal man, a man who was confident and sure of his place in the Cosmos as he saw it. To him the whole Universe was peopled by spirits, both stronger and weaker than he was; and he believed that it was their unpredictable and often capricious doings which were the underlying cause of every change in his surroundings. Accordingly, in his eyes change could be brought about by means of magical practices designed to cajole or force the spirits concerned into acting in a particular way. Thus if he wanted rain, he might carry out a ritual involving the symbolic pouring of water, and so on.

When some tribes in the region of the Middle East some fifteen thousand years or so ago began adopting horticultural methods and animal husbandry as means of subsistence, it marked the beginning of the end of the traditional life style, institutions, ideas and beliefs. The wanderer and food-gatherer became the settled farmer and animal husband living in a small hamlet which remained a permanent settlement until the surrounding land was exhausted. The adventurous life of the hunter was replaced by one of hard humdrum work. The physical freedom of the traditional tribesman was in time almost completely eroded when the long and terrible night of slavery, exploitation, and oppression descended on the unfortunate working masses of Mankind.

This great social upheaval has since become known as the Agricultural Revolution. Its effects were profound and completely shattered the fabric of tribal society. The Cosmos of tribal man seemed to fall apart before his eyes as its picture of the Universe no longer reflected reality as he experienced it. Man the farmer, at the mercy of floods, droughts, storms, and other ups and downs of Nature, gradually evolved the idea that he was in the merciless grip of all-powerful dominating nature gods who ruled the "New Universe" with an iron hand.

With this the religious phase of Mankind's development began. The tribal witchdoctor was superseded by the priest. In the new social scheme of things, if

a community wanted rain, for instance, it did not try to command or cajole spirits as did the hunting tribe. Instead, its members prayed and offered sacrifices to its particular god for whose mercy they pleaded.

All this brought about a profound change on the part of Mankind towards the world as a whole. The relatively confident stance of the tribesman was replaced by the submissive and abject approach towards both ecclesiastical and secular authorities which has been an attribute of the working masses ever the last few thousand years. For the armies of human donkeys who toiled ceaselessly from dawn to dusk the world was a vale of tears which had to be endured until one entered a state of bliss in the hereafter.

The actual birth of the city-state (and later the nation-state) began with the federation of tribes or of the clans of a large tribe under a strong central executive (a proto-state machine). People as a whole began to be organized not according to the clans they belonged to but according to the areas they lived in. Private wealth and social rights and privileges of the kind we know today also became part of the social scene. So did such things as law, money, mortgages, trade, writing, etc. - all of which we are so familiar with all these thousands of years later.

These new social phenomena were astonishing developments. So were the technological innovations such as huge irrigation systems, cities, and the pyramids of Egypt. And it all became possible not because some alien astronauts visited the Earth at the time, as some shallow-thinking writers assert, but because the old antiquated social structure had been destroyed and replaced by a new social system, which, however cruel it was in itself, was better adapted to the new mode of dealing with the physical and biological environment. The introduction of this new social system caused the release of a fantastic amount of social energy which rapidly gave rise to the social, economic, political, and technological developments just mentioned. Great and wonderful, as these new developments were, they, however, heralded the entry into the world of the bio-cultural dinosaur of the city/nation-state.

The Nation-State

Revolutionaries in our times have for long now tended to refer to human societies as feudal, capitalist, socialist, etc. However, these oft-used terms are very superficial and even misleading ones. For in the final analysis all societies, except for tribes, thrown up so far in the course of social evolution have been city-states or nation-states of one kind or another. Calling one "capitalist" and another "socialist" (e.g. Britain and the USSR, respectively, in our day and age) is like putting two different brand names on two essentially similar kinds of spades.

Now, what is a nation-state? First of all, it is a community of people living on a particular strip of territory to whose ownership they lay claim. Looking at this community from the outside we find that it is a very tightly bound one, so tightly bound that it may be considered an organism. It is an organism made up of people just like the human body is an organism made up of cells. Unlike the human body, however, the people making up a nation-state are not bound together physically. They are linked each one to the other by far more flexible bonds - bonds of mind. These mental bonds are the ideas, conceptions, attitudes, notions, and beliefs in general which are common to the members of every human community. Over the whole course of history of the city/nation-state social order the strength of such bonds of mind have varied both in

time and from place to place. They have been at their weakest during periods of social disintegration and during the early phases of development of new state societies (e.g. post mediaeval Italy, Germany, and France). While they have been strongest within fully developed state societies, of which the best examples are the nation-states of modern Europe. How flexible are these bonds of mind may perhaps best be seen in the case of the astronauts who first landed on the Moon. These intrepid Earthmen travelled a quarter of a million miles to another body in inter-planetary space. But while they were a vast physical distance from their home planet, they nevertheless at all times remained an integral part of their nation-state, The United States of America. For an ordinary Earthling the existence of bonds of mind is best demonstrated while travelling on the surface of our globe. If one goes from Britain to the Soviet Union or from The Netherlands to India one will feel very much an alien if one is unacquainted with the beliefs, customs, language, etc. of the host country.

However, though there are sometimes great cultural differences between countries, they are at heart all the same and have several fundamental things in common. For instance, when looked at from the outside all countries are national organisms (sometimes multi-national organisms like the USSR). On the other hand, when examined from the inside each one of these countries has a social system controlled by a state machine. Furthermore, all these state-controlled social systems are organised on the lines of a pyramid.

At the bottom of each social pyramid is the great mass of the nation's people, roughly ninety per cent of them. These are the doers, the order-takers, the have-nots, who are pressured by circumstances into doing the humdrum chores of the community - while being ordered about at each individual workplace and in the community at large by managerial barons and so-called experts, for whom ordinary workers are nothing more than organic cogs in the giant social machine which modern capitalism has created. Rising above the order-taking working masses are strata or layers occupied by the more privileged members of the nation-state; while the apex of the pyramid is made up of the few with the greatest privileges and rights. These latter people form the ruling class. Its members dominate the community because they occupy social positions with the greatest amount of influence and power. They are in no way morally superior to, nor do they possess better attributes than do, the working masses. Yet these dominant and usually arrogant few lord it over the ordinary people and quite openly enjoy rights and privileges of a fabulous kind at the expense of the working masses.

By its very nature the structure of the nation-state is an authoritarian one. Those at the bottom of the social pyramid must do what they are told, must submit to the dictates of those in authority, must even believe that they are destined, either through the will of God or historical circumstances, to play a humble, servile, unprivileged role in society. If the order-taking masses suddenly decided all at once to cease being tame donkeys, this particular social structure would quickly collapse and chaos would result if a new and higher anarchist system of social relations was not put in its place. Likewise, if those at the top of the social pyramid are not sufficiently dominant or assertive, the society in question may quickly decline politically, economically, or even culturally.

This is why any form of organization built on the lines of a pyramid - be it a state machine, a political party, a religious association, or a trade union - can never be democratic in nature. Even if those at the top have been elected to their positions of power the organization in question remains an essentially authoritarian one. Those at the bottom of the pyramid just cannot think and act on their own initiative, except in a very circumscribed way - as determined partly by the purpose of the organization, partly by its body of tradition, and partly by the dictates of its controlling clique. The pyramid kind of organization is at heart a minority management system: a few give the orders and the order-taking majority must obey them.

A nation-state is thus a bio-cultural organism with a pyramid-like social structure. The bottom of the pyramid is made up of the great majority of the nation's people, who do what they are told or what tradition and the mores of the social environment demand of them. The rest of the pyramid consists of layers of

privileged classes or groups arranged very much like the proverbial pecking order among farmyard hens. Because it is organised in this particular way the social environment of the nation-state is one which favours the ruthless social climber greedy for power, and, on the other hand, the apathetic and unassertive individual who is readily regimented. The most favoured social values are those which tend to increase one's social status and power. This is why so many people would prefer to be the bastard of a lord than the offspring of honest working class parents. Like a monster steamroller the nation-state tends to crush our manliness and sense of personal dignity.

While there may be a big difference in particular attitudes and economic interests between the higher and lower social classes of a given nation-state, they, nevertheless, all form part of the same bio-cultural organism. As the history of the last few thousand years has only too clearly shown, there is a basic unifying cultural factor embodied in the social pyramid of every nation-state in spite of inter-class tensions and struggles. And this unifying factor comes very much to the fore when the nation-state concerned is attacking or is being attacked by other countries. This is the well-known phenomenon of nationalism, which is reflected in the sense or feeling of 'patriotism' of the individual citizen.

Nationalism is often regarded as something with only a political aspect. But it is something of far greater depth than that. For nationalism springs from the very core of a given nation-state's beliefs, values, and institutions.

The commonly held view among revolutionaries of a given society with a ruling class ruthlessly oppressing the working masses - be they slaves, serfs, or wage-earners - is such an over-simplified and shallow picture as to be almost a caricature of the real life situation. Throughout the course of history ruling classes have very seldom had to establish direct military dictatorships over the masses. On the contrary, both the upper and lower classes have, as a general rule, 'cooperated' in the running of their respective states. And they did so not because the upper classes deliberately set-out to numb the lower ones with the drug of religion. Instead they worked together because the great majority of the members of each social class believed they were fulfilling their destined role in the life of their respective communities.

This phenomenon might well be called cultural nationalism. It is truly quite a remarkable thing because very often it leads to the bizarre situation in which the most oppressed and exploited members of a given nation-state will not alone meekly accept their enslaved condition but will even defend the very people and the social circumstances that cause them to be so enslaved. The First World War provided a horrific example of workers massacring each other in millions for the sake of the power lusts and economic interests of competing European ruling classes. From cultural nationalism springs the emotional cement which binds together the diverse elements of individual nation-states. It also generates the unseen but yet almost overwhelming unifying power of the 'system' which very often exerts stronger oppressive conforming pressures than more visible and tangible constraining forces stemming from governments.

The Industrial Revolution

The general way of life of the traditional nation-state, with its order-giving nobility and clergy and its order-taking slaves and serfs, would probably have carried on indefinitely in one form or another had it not been for the Industrial Revolution. This technological overleap, which began in Britain, was centred around the development of new techniques and means of producing society's needs. In general, it consisted of several nation-states led by England changing over to a very different way of dealing with the physical and biological environment. And, at heart, it amounted to these national bio-cultural organisms entering a wholly new field of ecological niches in the socio-physical milieu of our planet.

This technological overleap was very much similar in kind to the Agricultural Revolution; and just as the latter caused tremendous changes within the tribal social order of old so the Industrial Revolution has brought about tremendous changes within the traditional nation-state social order. Furthermore, just as the Agricultural Revolution gave rise to social conditions which permitted the eventual birth of the

social order of old so the Industrial Revolution has brought about tremendous changes within the traditional nation-state social order. Furthermore, just as the Agricultural Revolution gave rise to social conditions which permitted the eventual birth of the nation-state, so the Industrial Revolution is bringing about a state of things through which a wholly new trans-national anarchist planetary civilization can be created by the working masses in the course of social struggle.

The first phase of the Industrial Revolution was primarily mechanical so far as its technological aspects were concerned, and involved mainly the application of steampower to production machinery within a capitalist socio-economic framework. One of its main socio-economic effects was to bring about the emergence of huge armies of industrial workers and a new ruling class of industrial capitalists and financiers who owned and controlled the new means of production. These quickly became the most important social classes in the new technologically-advanced nation states, which included England, France, Germany, and the United States of America. The overall result of these developments in the latter countries was that the landed gentry was superseded in economic importance by the factory estate, the privileged social position of the aristocratic nobleman was usurped by the factory owner and financier, the peasant worker became secondary to the industrial wage earner, the age-old craft guild was replaced by the modern trade union, and the executive power of the traditional royal ruler was exchanged for a modern state machine and parliamentary forms of government.

Industrial capitalism and the technologically-advanced nation-state (with its highly organised centralised structure of a machine-like kind) had arrived on the stage of history. But no new society had been born, as so many radicals are still wont to believe. All that had occurred was that new wine had been poured into the old nation-state bottle.

Injustice, exploitation, and oppression of the masses continued as before, except that now it was more scientific and deliberate in form, as well as being on a much larger scale. Socialist ideas and movements sprang up to challenge the savagely repressive conditions of life of the working people who were producing all the wealth and riches being enjoyed by the industrial barons. But most socialists were greatly mistaken in believing that the way to liberate the masses was to capture state power and dictate to their capitalist oppressors. Lenin found himself in a position where he could put such ideas into practice. But in doing so he opened up the way for the most brutal dictatorship working people have ever suffered under. Lenin and many other (authoritarian) revolutionaries made the fundamental strategic error of trying to solve contemporary social problems in terms of the way of thinking of the prevailing social order. And because of this they failed miserably to create the kind of society they had long dreamed of and remained within the orbit of reformism in spite of their lofty aims. Only the anarchists, then as now, posed a valid challenge to the existing scheme of things. Because only they could see that the road to a truly new social order lay in transcending as speedily as possible the whole framework of thinking and acting of the nation-state, whose powerful gravitation-like constraining forces have always overwhelmed even the most militant revolutionary elements which sought to operate within its orbit of influence.

The Nation State Social Order

As a social order the nation-state is made up of a great many elements of which the most important ones are:-

(a) its narrow-minded nationalism and nationalistic prejudices which give rise to a wholly distorted view of history and of the importance of one's nation and its place in the world;

(b) its canonization of wealth-generating property be it state or privately controlled;

(c) its irrational superstitions and other weird beliefs which have for long engaged man's mind in an Iron Maiden;

(d) its notions of divinely-inspired morality which throughout much of its history has forced Man to conform to wholly unnatural patterns of conduct;

(e)its belief in the need for a parasitical order-giving social elite, which for thousands of years has with the gory appetite of a giant vampire sucked the life blood of the order-taking masses, who had been gulled into believing that their foul and atrocious condition formed part of an unchangeable scheme of things;

(f)its in-built cultural pattern requiring the vast proportion of each generation of people to transform themselves willy-nilly into muzzled working oxen who were cruelly crushed and continue to be crushed by a brutalising and inhuman social order;

(g)its limited economic output per head, which together with war and pestilence has been a curse upon mankind throughout all of recorded history;

(h)its need for a monetary system which is an indispensable component of a pre-automation economy in which it is necessary to have a means of rationing the always very limited quantity of a nation's produce;

(i)its system of producing goods for a market - be it 'free' or state controlled;

(j)its grossly unequal distribution of the nation's wealth due to the rapacious social elite, who control the means of production as well as the actual worker producers, having the 'right' to commandeer the greatest share;

(k)its hierarchical pyramid-like stratified social structure made up of different social classes which may be traditional (e.g. the nobility, clergy, slaves, serfs) or ultra-modern (industrial capitalists and financiers, managerial barons, wage-earning industrial workers, etc.);

(l)its managerial bureaucracies, which form part of every large-scale pyramid-like organization - be it in the field of industry, education, religion, politics, and so on - and whose existence has been based and continues to be based on the assumption that the great majority of people are some kind of unter-menschen incapable of organising and running their own collective lives and who must, therefore, resign themselves to their 'predestined' fate of forever being controlled by their so-called 'betters';

(m)its octopus-like state with its great mass of constricting bureaucratic tentacles by means of which the social elite, either directly or indirectly, maintains the 'smooth' running of a given nation-state;

(n)its barbaric penal system, which is geared to preserve the special rights and privileges of the social elite, while at the same time maintaining the internal 'harmony', however superficial it might be at times, of the state;

(o)its military forces, which every state society uses either to attack or defend itself against external enemies, or, if need be, against the members of its own population if or when they pose a threat to the overlordship of the social elite;

(p)its political parties, trade unions, and parliamentary systems of government, which are modern nation-state institutions representing the perverted form which democracy or democratic-like relationships must assume within the framework of the prevailing social order, which is essentially authoritarian and, therefore, anti-libertarian in nature;

Violence, irrationality, injustice, prejudice, and oppression of all kinds are the threads which compose the essential fabric of this particular social order, whose member states in the course of savage battles for survival have virtually dyed the Earth red with the blood of countless millions human beings, almost all of whom have been working people.

Without exaggeration, the nation-state is a real social dinosaur which glorifies economic, political, and military power, the nature and degree of which determines its ability either to attack or defend itself in 'patriotic' wars with other states - or, as in the case of the modern imperialist nation-states which were the first to become technologically developed, to colonise and enslave other peoples.

The Decay of the Nation State

The nation-state social order is today assimilating so many novel developments within its framework that there seems little doubt it is just as plastic in this

respect as was the technologically-advanced tribe all those scores of centuries ago. In spite of its great plasticity, however, there are very strict limits to the total range of changes which the existing social order can absorb without it collapsing as such. The tribal social structure fell apart, for instance, when tribespeople began to be classified by the supra-tribal federation executive, not according to the clans they belonged to, but according to the areas in which they resided. It was finally shattered when the rights, privileges, status and obligations of tribespeople came to depend exclusively upon what particular occupational group they belonged to in their respective communities.

When we take a wide-ranging look at our social order as it is today, we find that it is represented by well over one hundred nation-states varying from such huge giants as the USSR, China, and the United States to relatively tiny ones like Holland, Belgium, and Ireland. While each of these states possesses a distinct cultural identity of its own, there is at the same time a continuous of ideas, techniques, people, and commodities between them. This process of diffusion has always been a feature of our social order, however bitter national rivalry and competition. Today, however, this age-old process has reached such a height of intensity that it is now clear we are witnessing a wholly new inter-national phenomenon - comparable only to the forming of federations of tribes at the very beginnings of recorded history.

This new inter-national phenomenon has a wide diversity of elements, of which the more important ones are:-

- (a) the emergence of large and relatively stable federations of nation-states, which require a certain relinquishment of traditional national sovereignty on the part of each member state;
- (b) the growth of a global economy, within the framework of which individual national economies are in the process of being even more finely interrelated;
- (c) the forming of inter-national organizations which are global in their scope of operations, such as the now defunct League of Nations and the more recently established United Nations Organization with its many supra-national agencies (while such organizations have their roots in the nation-state social order and operate within a bourgeois framework, their very existence is nevertheless a sign of the times);
- (d) the increasing willingness of nations to cooperate with each other in the fulfilment of jointly determined projects;
- (e) the mass migration of peoples between nations;
- (f) the introduction of common inter-national measuring standards and the like, e.g. the metric system.

When combined these various factors appear as aspects of an overall situation in which both the deep-seated cultural barriers and the more shallow political divisions between peoples are being slowly broken down on a global scale. And if nothing unforeseen impedes its progress this global process will ultimately result in the emergence of a world 'nation', whose motto will almost certainly be "Our Country is the Solar System and all Mankind is our People".

However, all this is not occurring without very serious social tensions and struggles. The intermixing on a large scale of people of different nationalities and cultures, for instance, carries many social conflicts in its wake, as racial minorities demand an equal place in the sun as the citizens of their host countries. It is regrettable that often such conflicts take place at working class level, and this is something that must concern every socialist and anarchist. However, such social conflicts do have a very positive aspect in that through them the mono-cultural patterns of the individual nation-state are being greatly weakened and so facilitate the process towards the ultimate unification of mankind.

Together with these developments in the inter-national arena the economic/technological revolution is altering in a most fundamental way the traditional nation-state mode of dealing with the physical and biological environment. Among these major economic/technological developments are:-

- (a) the utilization of essentially new techniques in the manufacture of commodities;
- (b) the large-scale introduction of new power sources;
- (c) the wholesale exploitation of minerals, timber, and other kinds of natural raw material resources;
- (d) the making of artificial materials;
- (e) the ever-increasing control over the biological world;
- (f) the current attempts to control the Earth's weather patterns;
- (g) the development of fundamentally new kinds of transportation and communication systems;
- (h) the utilization of intensive 'factory farming' methods;
- (i) the beginning of inter-planetary space travel and research;

Hand in hand with these inter-national and economic/technological innovations, there are appearing certain socio-cultural developments (to a greater or lesser degree in the case of individual nation-states) which are having a profound effect on the traditional way of acting and thinking of the prevailing social order. These socio-cultural developments include:-

- (a) expanding leisure time;
- (b) decline of heavy manual labour;
- (c) the gradual disappearance of individual craft specialist occupations in economic life as ever more automated production systems are introduced;
- (d) the emergence of universal education;
- (e) the great increase of information and news media;
- (f) widespread travelling;
- (g) the decline of traditional religious beliefs and moral values based on precedent and authority;
- (h) the rise of the secular humanist outlook with its emphasis upon rational and humane ethical codes and the need for man to help himself rather than depend upon supernatural powers;
- (i) the breakdown of many of the traditional barriers between social classes;
- (j) a change in the attitude of the masses towards traditional ideas of fair-play, justice, social duties, rights and obligations;
- (k) the weakening of nationalistic consciousness (i.e. patriotism) in many parts of the world (this does not include areas where national liberation struggles are still in progress and where revolutionary nationalism is a progressive force);
- (l) the development of huge web-like managerial bureaucracies around the component units of ever more complicated political and economic systems;
- (m) the emergence of vast urban human zoos;
- (n) the emancipation of women.

Perhaps the most important development of all within the nation-state social order in recent times has been the emergence of growing numbers of freethinkers with a general libertarian attitude of mind and who within certain broad limits can be said to think for themselves. The rise of modern science has been one of the main features of this on-going libertarian process. And the scientific method itself has now become one of the most powerful intellectual tools of our times - though, unfortunately, it is very often used in a criminal way because of the narrow and perverting requirements of the nation-state.

As an intellectual tool, science has permitted modern man to discover a wholly new kind of Cosmos, very different from the tribal and traditional nation-state schemes of the physical world. Gone are the spirits and the all-powerful gods. And in their place are force-fields of different kinds forever struggling to master

each other. Science has discovered, for instance, that the Sun is a very different thing from what previous generations imagined it to be. We see it now not in terms of some sort of deity but as a compact system of interacting gravitational, electrical, magnetic, nuclear, chemical, and mechanical forces which are in a more or less balanced state at the moment. Indeed, we now see the whole Cosmos as a huge system of multifarious force fields in an overall state of equilibrium. These are blind and unconscious forces - fountains of brute energy. On the other hand we have Man, who is also a force, but unlike all the others is one which interacts in a conscious and deliberate way with physical nature, changing the latter to satisfy his needs on an increasingly large scale.

This newly developed capacity of Man for controlling or at least harnessing the blind forces of nature is having a tremendous effect on the old traditional picture of the Universe. The age-old belief about the hand of God causing all change in the world is fading away and with it is disappearing the traditional submissive stance of Man in the face of what he imagined to be an almighty deity. A new confident humanist approach to the world is gradually replacing the old one, as man begins to understand and control the same forces of nature that were feared so much in the past. Because of this new confident approach to the larger world, a scientist of today who wants rain, for instance, would not get on his knees and pray to God; and neither would he perform some magical rites. Instead he would set out to seed any available water-bearing clouds with the appropriate chemicals and so cause it to rain.

All these factors - political, economic, technological, social and cosmological - are giving rise to tremendous changes, particularly in the consciousness of the working masses of the world. No longer do these masses of ever more articulate and independently thinking people see the same meaning or value in ideas, notions, attitudes and institutions which their forefathers blindly accepted without question. And as a result they are fast becoming alienated from the whole existing framework of traditional beliefs, institutions, and way of life. For growing numbers of such people, life in the current materialistic rat-race amounts to nothing more than an absurd and meaningless existence. In their wide open eyes the technologically advanced nation-state is a huge soul-crushing machine which seeks to destroy their essential humanity or humanness while it exploits and manipulates them throughout the whole of their lives.

This process of alienation is of the greatest relevance when considering the decay of the existing social order, because, since a bio-cultural organism is ultimately held together only by its mental bonds, it follows that when these bonds begin to decay the society in question starts to disintegrate. As stated earlier, the essential mental bonds keeping members of a given social group together are the fundamental ideas, beliefs, notions, and attitudes of that particular society. When, therefore, people en masse start becoming alienated from traditional ways of thinking and acting the society to which they belong enters upon a phase of decay. This particular phenomenon occurred in a general way during that tumultuous epoch when technologically-advanced tribes in many parts of the Old World were giving way to proto-nations. It also occurred many times at the demise of individual state societies during the course of recorded history. And it is now occurring on a world wide scale and is one of the main symptoms of the general phase of decay which the nation-state social order has entered upon. A positive aspect of this process is that the traditional barriers (including narrow-mindedness) which have for so long divided the working masses of mankind are also being eroded and the conditions are being created for the full realization of that old socialist slogan: "Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains!"

The Working Masses Become Organised

The new industrial means of production and parliamentary systems of government, which are usually associated with the technologically-advanced nation-state, have now become very important elements in our social order. They emerged on the stage of history during a period of intense class conflict and their actual process of birth took the historical form of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie and proletariat ousting the nobility and clergy from their pre-eminent social positions both by direct struggle and by superseding landed property as the primary foundation of economic and political power.

In the context of the six thousand year history of the nation-state social order the modern bourgeoisie, which now includes both private enterprise and state managerial barons, is a modern social elite which has only just come to power. But because they are new to the stage of history does not mean to say that they are any different from social elites of past historical epochs. When the bourgeoisie of Western Europe, for instance, had ousted the landed nobility from their dominant social position they tried hard (and still do) to step into their shoes. But times had changed. For the relatively libertarian industrial worker never believed as did his fore-runners that the contemporary social situation, with its naked oppression, cruel injustices, and ruthless exploitation, was an unchangeable divinely ordered scheme of things. And so section after section of the ever-growing proletariat organised themselves in the face of intense opposition from the ruling bourgeoisie into trade unions and other labour collectives.

This was a truly remarkable development in the history of the emancipation of the working masses. But while it constituted an important forward step it was no more than this. For over a relatively short period of time the new labour movement became assimilated within the framework of the nation-state. And this process has been maintained ever since, to the extent that the traditional labour movement has now become fully institutionalised and forms an important bulwark of Establishments in most countries today.

As a result of these developments, the traditional left has now become riddled with contradictions and perversions; and like a person in the dark it gropes about completely lost. Many of its erstwhile radical parties have now become little more than political clubs with top heavy bureaucratic superstructures whose primary activities are concerned with organizational survival in the social environment of their respective nation-states.

The fossilization of the traditional left and the proliferation of a diversity of newer political parties and sects has led to much confusion among revolutionaries all over the globe. On the one hand, their professed desire is to see the establishment of a rational truly socialist social order in which the "government of the people will have given way to the administration of things". While, on the other hand, many of them are sceptical about existing revolutionary organisations ever achieving their announced aims. And do wonder; for how can political parties or groups organised along traditional pyramid-like lines, with order-giving cliques at the top and a mass of order-taking members at the bottom, ever bring into being a libertarian socialist society on our planet - which would not have an authoritarian hierarchical structure and which would embody a completely different system of human relations from the prevailing one? It would seem to be almost a truism to say that only organizations which are both libertarian (in the full anarchist sense of the term) in structure as well as in their mode of operations can pioneer the way to a trans-national global libertarian civilization.

Libertarian Struggles

There is already a radical libertarian movement in being. But because it lacks the vision, sense of purpose, and drive of the anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist movements of an earlier generation, much of its energy and efforts are being squandered, wasted, and misdirected.

In the field of industry this libertarian movement is being manifested not so much in the (socialist) fight for higher wages and living standards as in the struggle between order-taking workers, conscious of their status as second class citizens, and order-giving managerial barons and old-fashioned trade union bureaucrats, who have a vested interest in keeping the existing scheme of things in being. One can also detect this spontaneous libertarian movement in the educational field in the struggle between the libertarian student and school managers hell bent on maintaining what is at heart a conditioning geared to perpetuating this primitive, cruel, and barbaric social order of ours.

Another aspect of the general libertarian movement in our present day world is the appearance of world government and world citizen organizations - reflecting the growing desire of increasing numbers of people to overcome the limitations and

constrictions of out-dated political divisions on our planet. None of these latter organizations are anarchist in their aims but they contain a marked libertarian element in their purpose of seeking to transcend the barriers of the nation-state. So while they remain essentially bourgeois in outlook they have very progressive aspects which should be encouraged.

Yet another libertarian struggle, which is now assuming significant proportions, is that between the underprivileged alien or coloured person and the privileged racist citizen of any given nation state. As stated earlier, when this particular struggle erupts in any part of the world, it very often gives rise to social tensions between working class people as basic tribalistic passions are aroused in a capitalist socio-economic environment where competition for such basic needs as jobs and housing is the order of the day.

One of the most important libertarian struggles of all is centred around the growing armies of prisoners in our world. Prisons and prisoners were born with the nation-state social order over six thousand years ago. They came into existence with the emergence of class society dominated by a ruling clique who owned or controlled the most important means of production - of producing the 'social cake'. To safeguard their social system, they made a set of rules or laws (ostensibly for the good order of society) which were almost entirely concerned with the preservation of the rights of property owners and the special privileges of the controlling few. It was a legal set-up backed by the power and the might of the new state machine which from the moment of its creation began to operate in the interests of the ruling class who were in its driving seat, as it were. Needless to say, anyone from amongst the oppressed masses of the order-taking have-nots who broke 'the law' was punished, more than often savagely.

Penal institutions are still with us today; and prisoners are being packed into jails and concentration camps as the traditional forms of 'law and order' break down while at the same time political dissidents grow ever bolder. Traditional left political parties are totally incapable of understanding let alone becoming directly involved with the phenomenon of crime, prisons, and prisoners. Only libertarians, and more especially anarchists, can see that a legal and penal system forms an indispensable weapon in the nation-state's armoury of repression and that to attack and ultimately, by mass action, to destroy the nation-state and its ruling class and penal system must, of necessity, be the primary aim of any revolutionary worthy of the name.

When one looks back over the long history of class/state society in which the oppressed masses were utterly steeped in ignorance and had little freedom of thought and action, the emergence of a grassroots libertarian movement in our times appears as a remarkable phenomenon. And so it is. But the fundamental reasons for it often escape the eyes of even the careful observer. What is not generally realised is that the drive underlying the libertarian movement is not being generated by some petit-bourgeois desire for equalitarian human rights and freedoms. No, it is powered by something far deeper - by forces springing from the very essence of man.

The traditional view of Man was that he was created in the image of God and that after his fall from grace in the Garden of Eden he became a sinner and has remained the same ever since. What this approach never allowed for was that Man as a person evolves in the course of social evolution just as man the animal evolved in the course of biological evolution. Man the person is wholly the product of the social environment of ideas, institutions, social practices, and human minds. So long as the social environment remained undeveloped so man the person remained undeveloped. This was why there was no such thing as marked individual personalities, as we understand the term, within the world of the traditional hunting tribe. The average tribesman had little or no personality or sense of personal individuality. And he was quite literally unable to see himself as an individual apart from the broad mass of the other tribal members, whom he saw as a collective spread out in space and time. It was only when our social order came into being that clearly defined individual personalities - interacting with their much more developed social environment - appeared on the social scene.

With the appearance of the technologically-advanced nation-state the social environment developed apace. And this has led to the explosive growth of relatively mature and independently thinking people in the social environment of today's world. Thus it is the on-going development of Man the Person which forms the underlying reason for the appearance of the grassroots libertarian movement in our epoch.

Though social classes are naturally involved, current libertarian struggles are not assuming the form of class conflicts in the traditional sense of the term. The reason for this would seem to lie in the fact that while social classes and class viewpoints are an integral part of the nation-state social order, libertarian-revolutionary battles are being fought partly inside and partly outside the framework of the latter. For in seeking to establish trans-national libertarian institutions, such as workers and students control, libertarian revolutionaries at once put themselves beyond the plane of the nation-state.

Perhaps this particular point might be made more clear if one remembers that the social struggles which led to the establishment of the first trans-tribal social institutions, such as social classes and private wealth, arose out of situations involving people supporting an essentially trans-tribal way of life and thinking, fighting to assert themselves not just against the tribal elders but against all those seeking to preserve the fundamental thought and conduct patterns of the tribal social order. In a similar way, libertarian struggles of the anarchist kind consist of conflicts between order-taking libertarian people conscious of the oppressive yoke of the existing antiquated social scheme and social groups in executive positions in the social pyramid with a vested interest in maintaining institutions which are fast losing their social utility and whose only real justification for their continued existence is that they are traditional and therefore must be preserved - so our masters say - no matter how inherently irrational and even socially harmful they may actually be. In short, anarchist libertarian struggles consist of conflicts between the disaffected order-takers in the social pyramid and their order-giving controllers.

One may, of course, adopt the traditional class viewpoint when engaged in such struggles and see it as a conflict between the have-nots and the haves rather than one between the order-takers and the order-givers. But it can lead to no little confusion of mind, for instance, when libertarian workers are battling against trade union managers and other non-entities in the labour movement who regard themselves as 'working class fighters' while they work hand in glove with the capitalist bosses in planning and implementing the organization and regimentation of the working masses in the 'national interests' of the state.

If one sees the institution of workers control, for instance, in the context of the traditional socialist class viewpoint and visualises a libertarian struggle in industry as one between a have-not working class and a bourgeois class of haves, then workers control appears as little more than the creation of a socio-economic situation in which there is a more equalitarian distribution of the social wealth, perhaps under the aegis of a "workers republic" state machine. But, if on the other hand, the revolutionary adopts a trans-national anarchist standpoint (from the point of view of which both workers and their bourgeois masters and managers are seen to form part of the same social system), then a libertarian grassroots revolution appears as a struggle between revolutionary order-takers and all those actively supporting the way of life and thinking of the nation-state.

From such a standpoint, workers control, far from consisting merely of workers taking over executive power from state and private managers in their respective industries, appears as a trans-national institution through which the means of the production, distribution, communications, and transport serve only the needs of the people who exert full and direct control over them in each particular community. In such a situation both owners and managers and workers, as such (together with the difference between work and leisure) would disappear in economic systems geared to producing goods for social need rather than for profit or a state-run market. In a similar way, it would seem that students control would be far removed from simple democratisation of universities and schools through students taking over from existing managerial boards. Instead, such an institution would appear to involve a

wholly new approach to education in general, entirely different methods of education, and educational programmes geared primarily to meaningful living in a transnational libertarian social environment.

Libertarian Strategy

Of necessity, the libertarian revolutionary movement needs to have a very clear idea of what it is about and in what direction it should proceed. It requires a well-defined strategy of action, in other words. By its very nature this movement is not given to trying to gain control of the state machine in any given country nor in attempting to set up a state of its own, not even a world state. In general terms, it is primarily concerned with the creation of a wholly new global social infrastructure that would end the world's present ills and oppressions by replacing those social institutions and practices which are their root cause.

Because such a libertarian infrastructure can only be built by the masses of ordinary mankind the primary task for libertarian revolutionaries must be to encourage and inspire direct action in every field on the part of order-takers everywhere. But to get the masses into the collective habit of intervening directly in community affairs so as to bring about a situation favourable to them and not to their masters is the most difficult part of the whole course of a libertarian revolution from its ill-defined beginnings to its final triumphant conclusion.

Direct action of any kind by the working masses themselves runs completely counter to the whole tenor of the existing nation-state social environment in which ordinary people are brought up to believe that their pre-destined fate is to take orders and be led by leaders from birth to death. The whole set-up of the prevailing social environment is such, in fact, that there is an actual need for order-giving leaders, on the one hand, and a great mass of order-taking people, on the other. This is why so long as we have the nation-state social order in being the masses will need order-givers to lead them. They will continue to crave for and to glorify great leaders. And so the order-giver/order-taker minority management system is perpetuated generation after generation.

In the earlier part of this century the anarchist movement had a very simple strategy: arouse the masses of oppressed workers and destroy the state form of society. Anarchists of today, however, know by bitter personal experience that so conditioned are the masses after thousands of years of collective brainwashing that they find it very difficult indeed to abandon the idea that collective purposeful action without authoritarian leaders is possible and that a social system without a social pyramid and a state machine is a feasible goal. Not alone this, but in our day and age capitalist society has become much more tightly organised and machine-like and state machines are far more powerful and possess far more sophisticated means for controlling and regimenting people. Still worse is the fact that in the industrialised nation-states a situation is developing in which social conformity is being turned into a major 'national virtue', and anyone who disturbs the increasingly rigid state determined law and order patterns is seen more and more as a mentally ill person. Political dissidents are now being singled out for very 'special' treatment as enemies of the state; while radical political dissent in general is now being looked upon by the state as a form of psychosis requiring psychiatric treatment by state-appointed head-shrinkers.

Because of this constellation of new factors the task of the anarchist revolutionary in our times is much more difficult than ever before. And anarchists all over the world are finding out that in its death throes (of which its high degree of specialised and rigid social organization is an aspect) the nation-state of our late twentieth century times has become even more savage and fierce. In many ways it is now much more difficult in the industrialised states to organise mass action against the state and its organs of control than it was two or three generations ago. The modern centralised state is indeed a most terrible enemy to contend with. Nothing is too brutal or savage for it to use in the course of imposing its merciless will. For this reason it is vital that anarchists come to grips fully with this very grim situation. The old idea of organising the people en masse against the state and overthrowing it in one massive direct assault is almost impossible to

contemplate in most countries now. The modern state, because of its intelligence gathering services and means of repression is in a position to destroy any attempt at mounting a frontal attack on its structure. It would seem that the efforts of anarchists would be most productive in the direction of undermining the modern state by indirect means such as agitation among the masses and the continuous exposure of the crimes of the state and its henchmen. The object of this should be to create a militant minority with anarchist aims and organised in a leaderless anarchist way. Then after such a support base is formed an open political drive against the state could be set going. But where such a political movement would be impossible or was frustrated by the counter-moves of the state, then the use of peoples' guerrilla war techniques (particularly well organised sabotage of state installations to which the modern centralised state is particularly vulnerable) should be put into practice with the aim of disabling the whole state system as far as possible. When such extreme forms of action are required, however, a clear difference should be seen among anarchist revolutionaries between simple terrorism without popular support and guerrilla warfare arising out of the collectively-felt frustrations of a militant minority. An intelligently executed and successfully run peoples' guerrilla war campaign would have the effect of cutting the state machine down to size. And having thus lost its almighty image in the eyes of the community at large a situation might be readily brought about in which the more diffident people among the wider masses would be encouraged to adopt a more positive anti-state stance - with perhaps very far-reaching results.

If ultimately the masses of ordinary people of the Earth are to become involved directly in all the vital decision-making processes affecting them, they will have to organise themselves, not in the traditional hierarchical manner, but in a non-pyramid-like way. No amount of modern communications hardware will permit them to do this within the framework of the existing pyramid-structured social organization. It is only when this hardware is combined with a higher libertarian system of human relations that people will be able to involve themselves directly in the running of their factories, offices, universities, construction sites, shops, and so on, and in the management of the wider community.

The creation of such a system of human relations would, of necessity, include the building of production, distribution, communications, transport, educational, and whole community organisations in which the actual control of each production unit, etc. would be in the hands of those immediately involved with it.

The instant nature of trans-national institutions, such as workers control, cannot be over-emphasised. They will have to come into existence quite suddenly, for the reason that since they are beyond the cultural plans of the nation-state and represent a direct challenge to its own most fundamental institutions they just cannot evolve on any significant scale. However, while the appearance of such trans-national institutions may be quite sudden in historical terms, the actual 'moment' of birth may be quite extended in time. In the tumultuous peoples' guerrilla war situation envisaged above, for instance, the taking over and running by the people of production, distribution, etc. units would form a very necessary part of any anti-state campaign. So that the actual historical climacteric at which peoples' control emerges could involve a period of many years. (A further very important point with regard to the phenomenon of peoples' control is that a peoples' guerrilla war aimed at wearing down the state machine may well be the Anarchist answer to the Marxist 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. For during such a guerrilla war campaign the opposing social forces could be neutralised and their power eventually destroyed altogether.)

Once the basic trans-national institutions have been firmly established by the masses of the world's underdogs during the final phase of their revolutionary self emancipation the whole crumbling structure of the nation-state will finally collapse. It is then that the real work of the libertarian revolution will begin. Not alone will the formal pattern of existing civil-legal social relations be completely destroyed, but the actual physical scheme of production, distribution, etc. will have to be re-constructed from the bottom up. Because this whole physical scheme both reflects and embodies the injustices, prejudices, backwardness and shortcomings inherent in the nation-state social order. This fundamental transformation might take the form of building completely new kinds of human

communities (centred around what could be called the functional modules of a computerised global economy) whose physical engineering and social and economic organisation would reflect the libertarian way of life and thinking of their peoples.

The general situation in the technologically-advanced nation-states is now fast becoming ripe for the establishment of direct peoples' community control. But, in spite of this ripe situation, however, we must at the same time take full account of the possibility that the people of the technologically-undeveloped nations might eventually take the lead in pioneering the way to a libertarian trans-national society. The tribes who first ushered in the Agricultural Revolution were not the ones who fully exploited its multifarious possibilities. This task was left to the technologically-undeveloped tribes inhabiting the valleys of the Nile, the Tigris-Euphrates, the Indus, and the Yellow River. In a similar way it is possible and indeed very likely that the nation-states who pioneered the Industrial Revolution have already begun to suffer the common evolutionary fate of becoming overspecialised at their present level of development. Their socio-economic systems may have already become too rigidly specialised along capitalist lines and may be incapable of transformation except in the case of total collapse; while the actual consciousness of their peoples may likewise now be rigidly centred around capitalist concepts and values. If this is so, then it is quite conceivable that the 'unspecialised' peoples of the technologically-undeveloped world (with their pliant socio-economic systems) will become the vanguard of progressive mankind - in which case anarchists would be well advised to turn our eyes and energies in the direction of such peoples.

The Existential Vacuum

All over the world, including the Marxist-Leninist camp, there is developing what social psychologists and philosophers are calling an 'existential vacuum'. The old answers to those vital questions: "Who am I/What am I doing here/What is Man's Place in the scheme of things?", no longer satisfy. Life and living for many people has become a meaningless voyage through an endless void cut short only by the oblivion of death. The masses are becoming alienated from age-old institutions and traditional ways of thinking and acting. And great numbers of them are turning to all kinds of escapist pursuits in a desperate and usually vain attempt to find meaning and satisfaction in their humdrum purposeless lives.

Even revolutionaries are finding themselves lost in the vast emptiness of the existential vacuum. For growing numbers of them the notion of economic man and the dream of building a materialistic heaven on earth are fast ceasing to fire their imaginations. They are beginning to appreciate that Man is a creature of many dimensions; that he certainly does not live by bread alone; and that he is totally lost when he does not feel part of some greater on-going process.

This is not the first time that the world has witnessed such a universal existential vacuum. It/before at the time of the collapse of the old tribal social order all those thousands of years ago; and the mass uncertainty and confusion of the period was reflected in its abstract art forms. In our day and age it is the turn of the traditional nation-state world picture of man and his place in the scheme of things to rapidly become eroded. The traditional cosmology of the nation state portrayed a man-centred Universe created by a god who also made our hierarchical society with its privileged few and masses of human order-taking donkeys in human form who were brought up to believe that they had to wait until they died for justice and happiness. For great and growing numbers of people today the notion of such a scheme of things has lost all credibility. Except for a vaguely held belief in some kind of god, most of these people reject this world picture, though often mostly in an articulate way.

Every social order has its background cosmology or world picture which serves to provide meaning and purpose for people as they act out their lives on the stage of history. The hunting tribesman and the citizens of pre-industrial state society had their respective world pictures which provided them with a satisfactory account of the underlying cause of change in the Cosmos as they saw it. Likewise the trans-national libertarian planetary civilization of the future will have its own particular world view and notion of the Cosmos. And already it is possible to envisage what kind of picture this will be.

In the years immediately following the Second World War a significant but hardly noticed change took place in the basic assumptions of scientists about the origin of the Solar System and living forms. Before that it was generally believed that Man and the Earth were the products of a fantastically lucky combination of accidental circumstances. But the new post-war generation of younger scientists moved slowly but surely towards an altogether different standpoint from which Man and our planetary system appeared as the outcome of a natural development pattern whose origin and evolution were not in any way accidental in the usual sense of the term. From this kind of starting point it was only a short step to the notion that such development patterns might be common occurrences in the galaxy. So that in the eyes of the scientists concerned, it no longer seemed likely that our own planetary civilization was the only one in the Universe.

This did not mean, however, that they believed the development of the galaxy of stars in which we are situated was under the control of some supernatural power. It only meant that they had begun to realise that events which take place in local regions of the galaxy tend to occur in the form of chains of causes and effects within the framework of which a given cause gives rise to a certain effect which in turn becomes the cause of yet another effect and so on. Each of these causal or development patterns could be likened to a stream running down a mountainside: its waters spurt from a spring high up on the mountain, and following a very definite path tend to flow willy-nilly towards the flatter ground below.

In many ways the mountain itself could be compared with our galaxy. For just as the mountain is the product of violent pressures and continually interacting forces, so our galaxy, as it is at this moment in Cosmic time, is the outcome of a long fifteen thousand million year evolutionary process which scientists believe may have begun its career as a massive rotating cloud of hydrogen gas and dust which is now a lens-shaped island archipelago of thousands of millions of stars. Furthermore, just as the mountain may have many streams running down its sides, so the galaxy may have many development patterns giving rise to stars and other bodies here and there.

In the beginning this process of star formation seems to have started with the breaking down of the original cloud of primeval hydrogen into relatively small rotating volumes of swirling gas and dust, whose eventual condensation resulted in the birth of numerous stars without planets. Now, as in the case of our Sun, the nuclear energy of these stars was derived from the transformation of their hydrogen content into the next higher element, helium - as a result of which energy, mostly in the form of light and heat, is released. When they had completed this long process, these first stars entered upon a second nuclear cycle, which led to the production of carbon and oxygen. And so it went on until, most, if not all, of the heavier elements were created.

It was at this point in the evolutionary process that any star which is more than one and a half times heavier than our Sun tends to blow up for reasons which need not concern us here. Astronomers are certain that this is what happened to those first stars. But their violent deaths did not spell the overall end of our galaxy's development.

Because they had created an abundance of atoms of the higher elements within themselves these stars in the course of exploding spread this heavier nuclear material in the form of gas and dust around their local area of the galaxy. This meant that it was now possible for at least some of the second and succeeding generations of stars to have planets, like or unlike our own, made up from this heavier nuclear material.

Our Sun is one of the smaller kinds of stars, and together with its planets it was also born from a cloud of hydrogen gas and dust enriched with heavier nuclear material. The atoms of our bodies, of the air we breathe, and of the very ground we stand on were thus once part of some long dead star - which is a rather sobering thought when one reflects upon it; and it helps to make one realise that even when we try to bury our heads in the sands of our little individual worlds, we too can never completely cease being part of the larger universal scheme of things.

Stars like our own Sun tend to be found in groups of two or more dissimilar kinds. There are also, however, a great many solitary sun-type stars scattered about throughout the great spiral arms of the galaxy. Some astronomers believe that the development paths of these stars - because they started out as gas and dust clouds of the same kind and with the same rate of spin - have so closely followed the same course as that of our own Solar System, that each such star may have an Earth-like planet situated about the same distance from its parent sun as we are.

A few years ago the Rand Corporation in America did some research along these lines and they came up with an estimate of about six hundred thousand Earth-like planets in the galaxy, which is considered to be a very conservative figure by many scientists. If they do exist, on many of such planets may be 'civilizations' way behind or perhaps even millions of years ahead of our own one. Some of these latter world societies may have for long been capable of technological feats which would defy our imaginations. It could well be that their spacecraft have been monitoring (but not interfering with) the natural process of Man's evolution and human history - just as we might watch the growth of a plant in a garden - and that a continuous flow of information has been sent back to other world cultures somewhere out there in the vast inter-stellar ocean of space and time.

Of Other Men Amongst the Stars

One might well ask at this point: what kind of creatures would be the likely denizens of these other possible worlds among the stars? The answer is very simple: If those other worlds are exact replicas of the Earth, then the kind of living forms which might evolve in such environments would be very similar to those on our own planet, providing, of course, that they were carbon-based forms with a genetic system like ours.

In the case of our Earth different kinds of animals struggling to survive in the same kind of bio-physical milieu tended to adopt forms very similar to each other - in appearance, at least. To find an example of this phenomenon one need look no further than an extinct reptile known as the plesiosaurus, the dolphin which is a mammal, and the tuna fish. Although each of these particular species of animal living forms evolved from different kinds of ancestors their bodies eventually adopted the form best suited to two-metre long animals living in a watery environment.

However, in spite of these well known facts regarding biological evolution on our Earth we cannot be absolutely certain that the same thing holds true for the development of living forms on planets in other solar systems. And, accordingly, there is much room for wonder and speculation in this particular field. Unfortunately, much of such speculation tends to come from the pens of over-imaginative writers for whom relationships between world societies in instellar space are reducible in the final analysis to personal contacts between individual 'humanoids'; while the civilizations themselves are placed on the same footing as human societies here on Earth. From this kind of standpoint the background environment of the galaxy appears as just an extension or an enlargement of the terrestrial environment - so that the fantastically vast space-time barriers between hypothetical civilizations are equated with certain kinds of geographical barriers here on Earth, such as, for example, the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

If one sets out with these superficial assumptions, then it is but a short step to the science-fiction fantasies of 'alien' hordes sweeping through inter-stellar space like a plague of locusts. But, on the other hand, if one sets out from the starting point that relations between planetary civilizations may not be at all like those between societies on our Earth, then the whole basis of our ideas about extra-terrestrial cultures would have to be changed. For example, it is very possible that just as social cells are found together in the form of higher organizations, such as our own bodies, and we in turn form part of human bio-cultural organisms - of which a cosmopolitan libertarian planetary society (based both on the Earth and the other planetary bodies in the Solar System) would seem to be the highest kind - so individual planetary civilizations may tend to form a still higher (galactic) system functioning within the galactic dimension of space and

If this turns out to be actually the case, then relations between planetary

civilizations in inter-stellar space would belong to a space-time plane of inter-course altogether different from the kind of one portrayed by the average science fiction writer. It would be a plane of intercourse in which individual humanoids could not play a meaningful part - no more than the individual calls of our own bodies, for example, can play a meaningful part in the socio-cultural environment of human society in which we live out our lives.

From the vast amount of evidence and scientific speculation about the galaxy which has been amassed over the years it is now possible to detect one overall development pattern. On the one hand, we have large massive stars with short life-times, which act as producers of heavy nuclear material. While, on the other hand, we have long-lived solar systems - many of which may be like our own - continually being born from this material.

Each of these solar systems may be likened to a lone coral island in the Pacific whose development goes on more or less independently of the many other similar events taking place elsewhere in that great ocean. Take our Solar System, for example. This little archipelago of planets, moons, asteroids, comets, and the Sun itself has been spatially separated from the rest of the galaxy for at least five thousand million years. And, except possibly for some periods of intense radiation from nearby stellar explosions or clouds of gas or dust drifting into circum-solar space, its evolution as a one-way process has proceeded uninterrupted for all that vast length of time.

So far as the future of the Solar System is concerned, scientists now know that our Sun will continue to 'burn' for the next eight thousand million years or so (until the end of its current hydrogen-helium cycle) - after which Mankind would have to take some far-reaching steps to survive. While careful calculations suggest that is used properly and responsibly (which is far from being the case right now), we have sufficient resources of matter and energy within the Solar System to last us indefinitely. The only thing which seems to threaten both our short-term and long-term survival are the destructive elements and other harmful factors which are now so prominent in our diseased nation-state world. These include the armaments race between various groupings of nation-states, wasteful market-based capitalist economies, and world-wide pollution. However, if by a process of unrelenting and uncompromising revolutionary struggle the world's oppressed peoples can bring into being a full-blooded libertarian socialist society on our planet within the next few decades or so, we might have a fantastically long and magnificent future ahead of us. Only then, in fact, need we contemplate what mankind might do when the Sun ends its present life pattern in several thousand million years and becomes a very different kind of star.

But what possible part could Mankind or perhaps other planetary civilizations have in the great evolutionary scheme of the galaxy? What role, in other words, could we create for ourselves in the grand Cosmic drama of interactions between men, planets, stars, and space-time?

When one looks at the evolution of the Solar System one first sees a cloud of atoms gradually condensing to form the Sun and planets. Up to this point the whole process proceeds according to a pattern determined by the pushes and pulls and transformations of the blind forces of nature. Then after a great period of time has elapsed, on one of these planets, i.e. the Earth, yet another kind of development pattern sets itself in motion and gives rise to the emergence of living matter in the form of bacteria and higher single-celled creatures.

These latter living forms are not exotic in any way, and are products of nature just as the Earth itself is. From a general chemical point of view these creatures could be described as complex self-stimulating organizations of atoms which differ from the Sun and the Earth only in the sense that they happen to be organized in a fine-structured way. From the biological point of view, however, these single-celled bacteria and related creatures possess qualities and attributes which put them in an entirely different plane from that of the Sun and the Earth; and as such it would be misleading to regard them as nothing more than self-organizing organizations of atoms. A great many people do see them in this latter light, unfortunately, and thus are quite unable to grasp the real nature of things -

as is the case with those writers who tend to see Man as little more than a naked ape.

One important feature of even the most lowly organisms is that in order to survive they must involve themselves in one way or another with their local environment; and in the course of doing this they give rise to changes in the latter. Perhaps the best example of this phenomenon may be seen in the way 'iron' bacteria are able to stimulate the rusting of iron pipes and other objects in the course of obtaining their energy supplies.

On a higher level, in the case of many-celled animals and plants, the effects of organisms on the environment are greater still. Plants, for example, help provide the oxygen in the atmosphere which animals breathe. While animals, in turn, through such activities as grazing, burrowing, and the dam-making activities of the beaver, can change the local environment in sometimes very significant ways.

But it is only when we arrive at the still higher level of bio-cultural organisms made up of human beings that really important changes begin to be made in the environment over quite short periods of time. One could say, in fact, that at this very point in terrestrial evolution a profound change begins to take place in the relation between organisms and the background environment. Up to this stage organisms have more or less to adapt themselves to the overwhelmingly dominant environment. But from this point on this rather lop-sided relationship tended to become reversed as the newly-evolved bio-cultural organisms began very gradually to adapt the surrounding environment to their particular needs and requirements.

In many ways the first bio-cultural organisms, which were hunting tribes, had little more effect on the environment than groups of apes had. But it was the planned and deliberate approach which tribes adopted in the course of obtaining their material requirements that made them so very different from even the best organised ape societies. This purposeful approach was exhibited in the way tribal members made and used stone tools and weapons, and in the way they organised themselves for the purposes of hunting, gathering food, and so on.

With the emergence of our present social order bio-cultural organisms in the form of city-states and later nation-states began to have tremendous effects on the physical and biological environment, through such survival activities as agricultural practices (with attendant large-scale irrigation schemes), animal husbandry (with its control over breeding etc.), metal using, house and road building, basketry, pottery, weaving, etc. This was five thousand years ago. Today the formative influence of technologically-advanced nation-states is so great that we are already beginning to have an effect, however slight, on some of the bodies in inter-planetary space.

When the evolution of the Solar System and living forms is looked at from this standpoint, one can see two different yet mutually complementary development patterns. One the one hand, there is the blind 'natural' one, which gave rise to the Solar System in the first place, and which still may be observed in the continuing evolution of the Sun and its general planetary system. And, on the other hand, within this overall physical scheme there is an ever-growing formative influence - in the form of living organisms and bio-cultural organisms - which ever more deliberately and with ever greater effect begins to modify the course of development of the first pattern.

To understand this more fully, one might imagine, as before, that the 'natural' pattern is a stream flowing unrelentingly down a steep mountainside. While our planetary civilization (in spite of its being fragmented into nation-states) could be seen as a man climbing painfully up the mountainside and modifying, but as yet only very partially controlling, the strong downward flow of the stream.

It is possible that one day, however, we may be able to completely control the flow of this stream. On the Earth we have just begun to control the major forces of nature, such as hurricanes in their early stages of formation. And already the scientists concerned are talking about making the planet Mars suitable for human habitation or even of building our own mini-planets in near-Earth space. While long-term plans for changing the Moon's surface will be under way before the end of

the century. Given sufficient time and a libertarian social bursting with liberated constructive social energy and initiative, we may eventually come to completely alter the Solar System as nature made it.

As a planetary civilization we have only just been born. But we have already shown ourselves capable of bringing about such great changes in the Earth's environment that our potential for re-ordering the Earth must be taken very seriously. Furthermore, if we suppose for a moment that we are not alone in the galaxy - that there are numerous planetary civilizations at different stages of development in inter-stellar space - then the cumulative effects of their practical activities could be very considerable, more especially if they were to deal with the galactic environment collectively.

Such a collective organization of planetary civilizations is a very possible outcome of evolution in our galaxy. Just as certain kinds of atoms form cells, and social cells go to make animals and human beings, so it is possible that planetary civilizations, made up of individual human beings, may in turn tend to form a still higher system. This might seem a trifle fantastic at first hearing. But a great many reputable scientists believe that a chain of civilizations is already in being in the galaxy and that we only have to plug ourselves into it. If this kind of galactic system does form part of the larger scheme of things, then such a higher fine-structured galactic organization would be to our galaxy what our planetary civilization is to the Solar System. It would, in fact, be like all the individual men climbing up the mountainside joining together and as a complex organization launching an onslaught upon the mountain as a whole.

The vision underlying this whole mighty scheme makes all the prevailing ones appear pale and puny in comparison. And so they are puny - not just in themselves but because they tend to diminish the stature of Man. The traditional religious vision turns Man into a fawning abject individual, a prey both to outward circumstances and to his own inward fears. While the more superficial capitalistic/materialistic one sees Man in terms of a naked ape forever bent on satisfying either real or imagined economic needs.

Rising above these petty schemes is the vast unlimited panorama of the fully developed Anarchist vision. Within the framework of this grand scheme the ultimate role of humanity appears as a part played on a galactic stage. It would indeed be a magnificent part to play in the great drama of the Cosmos. But there is no inevitability about our arriving at such a situation. Just as the man representing our planetary civilization might stumble at any moment and fall to his death down the steep mountainside, so we on this Earth of ours could destroy ourselves by some folly of our own creation.

And such a planetary catastrophe is now fast becoming a real probability. Dark clouds hang over the Earth. The chance that we may shortly end up as a ghost planet is very high on the cards. Never before in history did we possess the means to destroy ourselves so utterly and completely. But we do now, and not just deliberately and coldbloodedly but through sheer indifference and irresponsibility on the part of the ruling classes of the Earth. By us, the working masses, just allowing our order-giving masters to go on as they are - building up armaments, polluting the Earth for the sake of short-term gains, and wasting our precious resources - we may be unwittingly letting them set in motion certain destructive trends that will not be possible to reverse in time. And so we could race on towards our own inevitable destruction without ever having realised our unfathomable potential.

The choice before us is simple. Like a man awaiting execution we can continue to endure the degradation and agonies of mind and body which this whole rotten system and its power-hungry order-giving vultures impose on us. Or we can destroy it and put in its place a higher civilization - an Anarchist society - and thus open up the way for unchained Man to carve out a destiny worthy of his kind amongst the stars.

ORDER-TAKERS OF THE WORLD REVOLT, 'TIS TIME TO BREAK LOOSE FROM OUR CHAINS!

Michael Tobin

Note for Revolutionaries: "The positive quality of the true revolutionary is that he is ready to die, not to defend an ideal, but rather to convert it into reality."